

Today's News - Thursday, July 23, 2009

- It's Stirling Prize shortlist day and the pundits come out to play: Long: "worthy but dull, with too many usual suspects"; Dyckhoff: "how few creep over the bar into excellence" (and doesn't bode well for the future); Woodman: "some pretty leftfield choices"; Stewart: "it's good to have something positive to discuss even if it is a strange shortlist."
- Now for a breath of fresh air: an eyeful of the 2009 Open Architecture Challenge: Classroom finalists.
- Farrelly is thoughtful (and amusing) about the gender(s) of cities: can they be fast and warm and fuzzy at the same time?
- Report: "Moscow Heritage at a Crisis Point" - no good news here.
- Nouvel's MoMA tower: the Planning Commission "swoons"; but there's still considerable community opposition.
- Kennicott on Rogers' first D.C. project: it "challenges the institutional architecture of Washington not with some meaningless confrontational gesture, but with solid thinking and design excellence" (oh - there's a cool "tree" too).
- Mazria on why Section 201 of the Waxman-Markey climate bill (re: building energy codes) must not be changed or weakened: "without it, we simply cannot meet GHG emissions reduction targets."
- The Living Building Challenge: the "ultimate green building certification" - with criteria most green buildings today could never meet.
- Yesterday's "arbo-architecture" slide show has a more in-depth story today.
- Jencks's Scottish garden: railroad included (great pix).
- Pittsburgh can soon lay claim to the largest green living wall in the U.S.
- Rybczynski on the history and future of airport design: they've "become as ubiquitous- and about as glamorous - as bus stations."
- NYC's unsightly temporary construction sheds are becoming a bit too permanent; the solution: keep an eye out for a design competition.
- Anderton shares recollections of Shulman with some notable folks who knew him; and Cuff discusses cityLAB's WPA 2.0 infrastructure competition.
- Jacobs comes away from SmartGeometry conference with a new word, and wonders if software is "taking the 'wow' out of wow-inducing buildings."
- Call for entries: Ideas Competition for Bruce Lee's Residence in Hong Kong.
- We couldn't resist: Outraged at this year's Stirling shortlist? Then pick your own and win a prize.

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RIBA Stirling Prize 2009 - shortlist revealed + Kieran Long's alternative Stirling shortlist...The problem is that it has nothing to do with good architecture...list we're left with is worthy but dull, with too many usual suspects. -- Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners (x2); BDP; Tony Fretton Architects; Alford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM); Eric Parry Architects [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Stirling Prize 2009: is Gherkin architecture a thing of the past? ...after years of showstoppers, things are getting quieter...how few creep over the bar into excellence! And, with public and private spending shrivelling away, the danger is, in years to come we'll get the worst of all worlds - modest architecture, cheaply built. By Tom Dyckhoff, Stirling Prize judge- The Times (UK)

2009 Stirling Prize shortlist: ...includes some unexpected choices, and at least two extremely strong ones...you have to admit that there are some pretty leftfield choices in here. By Ellis Woodman -- BDP; Eric Parry Architects; Rogers Stirk Harbour + Partners; Tony Fretton Architects; Alford Hall Monaghan Morris (AHMM) [images]- BD/Building Design (UK)

Finally, some good news: the Stirling prize is back: After months of mostly bad news in architecture, it's good to have something positive to discuss even if it is a strange shortlist. By Dan Stewart- Building (UK)

2009 Open Architecture Challenge: Classroom Finalists -- Feilden Clegg Bradley/Architecture for Humanity UK; Petr Kostner/Martina Sobotkova/Sona Huberova; Rajesh Kapoor/Prashant Solanki/Bharat Karamchandani/Kiran Vaghela; Section Eight Design; Gifford; Built Form; Arquitectura Justa; Gensler [images]- Architecture for Humanity

A fast city that's warm and fuzzy: Here's what I think: men do stupid things fast, women do stupid things slowly...since our cities are fictions, or mindsets made manifest, it's reasonable to suppose that gender, and velocity, might come into it...But perhaps...the city...is approaching its glorious collaborative apotheosis, where we can have the thrill of speed without its harshness and the buzz of being-there without its smugness. Perhaps. By Elizabeth Farrelly- Sydney Morning Herald

Report: Construction Destroying Old Moscow: "Moscow Heritage at a Crisis Point" released by the Moscow Architecture Preservation Society, is an updated version of a 2007 report that outlined the threats faced by the city's architectural heritage..."Never has Russia strayed so far from the scientific principles and methods endorsed by the international academic community..." -- Docomomo- The Moscow Times (Russia)

Taller Is Smaller? Planning commission swoons for Jean Nouvel's MoMA tower...But if the commissioners' thoughts were cast heavenward, the considerable community opposition...remained terrestrial...commissioners' chief concern was not so much how the tower might change to address community concerns as how it could stay the same, ensuring Nouvel's designs and none others...would be implemented. [images]- The Architect's Newspaper

A British Invasion: In His First D.C. Project, a London Architect Quietly Subverts the Capital's Stodgy Rules...300 New Jersey Ave. NW challenges the institutional architecture of Washington not with some meaningless confrontational gesture, but with solid thinking and design excellence...Novel, but welcome and thoughtful. By Philip Kennicott -- Rogers Stirk Harbour [slide show]- Washington Post

Oh, Those Sexy Building Codes: Buried deep within the 1,428-page Waxman-Markey climate bill...is Section 201...No matter what else is compromised or changed...Section 201 must not be changed or weakened. Why? Because...without it, we simply cannot meet the greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions reduction targets called for...We won't even come close...covers building energy codes...that will transform the entire built environment in the U.S. by 2050. By Edward Mazria-

The ultimate green building certification: The criteria set forth by the Living Building Challenge are extremely stringent and go beyond LEED certification standards...there are no points, simply prerequisites. A building must meet every single prerequisite in order to qualify...criteria is not something that the majority of green buildings are able to meet at this time. - Mother Nature Network

New Branch of Architecture: Grow Your Own Skyscraper: Three young German architects are designing structures made completely out of living trees, including a pavilion for concerts in downtown Stuttgart. But designing the ultimate treehouse turns out to be trickier than one might expect. [slide show]- Der Spiegel (Germany)

Machine in the Garden: Charles Jencks's Garden of Scottish Worthies...incorporates a symbolically loaded theory...2-linear-acre garden borders active railroad tracks and features rising mounds and a new bridge integrated into a symbolic program. [slide show]- Architectural Record

PNC Bank Building Largest Green Living Wall in U.S.: ...to be constructed on the south side of the bank's Pittsburgh headquarters...will provide shade to surrounding sidewalks, absorb sound, and cool the surface of the south wall by 70 to 80 degrees. -- Green Living™ Technologies; Mingo Design [image]- Fast Company

Gate Change: The history and future of airport design: Airports have become as ubiquitous—and about as glamorous—as bus stations. Perhaps that's really the new model...the kind of theatricality shown by the first generation of airports now seems out of place. By Witold Rybczynski -- Delano & Aldrich; Eero Saarinen; Helmut Jahn; Fentress Bradburn Architects; Foster + Partners; Rogers Stirk Harbour; Renzo Piano [slide show essay]- Slate

The Oldest Established Permanent Temporary Sheds of New York: They Go Up on Sidewalks to Save People From Falling Cornices but Never Come Down: Now the City Council has a bill before it to legalize ads as a revenue source...But others have higher ambitions: They want an all-new sidewalk shed - airy and elegant. The talk among architects, in fact, is that the city is about to launch a competition to design one. [slide show]- Wall Street Journal

DnA/Frances Anderton: Goodbye, Julius Shulman: ...recollections from some of the people who knew him -- Dion Neutra, Craig Krull, Juergen Nogai, Eric Bricker, Ann Videriksen, Frank Gehry and Elizabeth Armstrong -- as well as pithy taped commentary from Shulman himself; Dana Cuff of cityLAB talks about WPA 2.0, a competition [for] an imaginative vision for new infrastructure in our post-industrial age-KCRW (Los Angeles)

Off-the-Shelf Genius: Is widely available computer software taking the "wow" out of wow-inducing buildings? ...I came away from SmartGeometry...with a new word: parametric...show-off "wow" buildings will become increasingly commonplace—but they'll no longer be designed by the stars. The only true stars will be the guys who design the parametric software. By Karrie Jacobs -- Foster + Partners; Kohn Pedersen Fox (KPF); Arup; Buro Happold- Metropolis Magazine

Call for entries: Ideas Competition for Bruce Lee's Residence, Kowloon Tong, Hong Kong; registration deadline: August 31- Hong Kong Institute of Architects / HKI Planners / HKI Surveyors

Pick your own Stirling Shortlist: Outraged at this year's Stirling Shortlist? Think you know better? Suggest your own from the list of 22 RIBA Award winners that make up the Stirling midlist - and win a copy of Phaidon's 10 x 10 / 3 [images]- The Architects' Journal (UK)

Book Review: "Everything Must Move: 15 Years at Rice School of Architecture 1994-2009": There's a Texas flood of architectural ideas that gives ample evidence of an architecture school that unsettles pat assumptions. Who could ask for anything more? By Norman Weinstein- ArchNewsNow

-- KK Letter: The Wanås Foundation, Knislinge, Sweden (Antony Gormley, Dan Graham, Jenny Holzer, Per Kirkeby, Maya Lin, Robert Wilson, etc.)
-- Pappersbruket: Östanå Papermill, Broby, Sweden

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